



A GUIDE TO THE AUTO REPAIR LAW

For Mechanics and
Repair Facilities

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Because you are a state-certified mechanic or a registered repair facility, Michigan motorists depend on you to keep their vehicles running safely and efficiently.

By following the guidelines in this brochure, you can avoid misunderstandings and problems with customers. It covers such important areas as written estimates, itemized final invoices, and mechanic certification.

For more details, consult the Michigan Department of State's *Repair Facility Manual*, issued to your repair facility upon registration.

If you have any questions, contact the Department of State at the telephone number given in this brochure. The department

licenses and regulates mechanics and auto repair facilities, informs customers and investigates complaints.

■ Be Properly Certified

You must be Michigan-certified to do work in any of the categories of major motor vehicle repair. It is against the law to work in areas for which you are not certified. Your mechanic certificate must be displayed where it can be clearly seen and read by the customer.

If you are not certified in a category, you must hold a trainee permit to work in that area. A trainee must work under the supervision of a certified mechanic at all times.

Some certification categories require periodic recertification. For more information about recertification, check the Department of State's web site at www.michigan.gov/sos and click on "Services to Businesses."

Mechanics and repair facilities must renew their certifications and registrations with the Department of State every year.

■ Always Provide An Estimate

Michigan law requires you to give every customer a written estimate when the cost of repairing a vehicle is \$20 or more.

This means you must actually hand a written estimate to the customer – whether or not the customer requests it.

When the job will cost less than \$20, you do not have to provide a written estimate prior to the repair unless the customer asks for it. The best advice is to always provide an estimate, no matter what the job will cost.

A written estimate must tell what work will be done, the price of parts, the cost of labor, and an estimate of time. The estimate must be given to the customer before the work begins on the vehicle.

If you ask a customer to sign any written form, you must give him or her a copy of it at that time. Do not ask the customer to sign a blank form.

You may not exceed the written estimate by more than \$10 or 10% (whichever is less) unless you re-contact the customer, either by telephone, in person, or in writing, and advise what the added cost (parts and labor) will be. The customer must approve the added cost.

(Sample Estimate and Final Invoice)

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■ Provide An Itemized Invoice

When repairs are complete, Michigan law requires you to provide customers a final invoice that lists the prices for parts and labor, the parts that were used, and tells whether the parts were new, used or rebuilt.

The invoice must also include the name and certification number of each mechanic who worked on the vehicle or who inspected and approved repairs to the vehicle.

The invoice must be signed by the owner or someone authorized by the owner, to certify that repairs were done properly.

A customer must receive a copy of the final invoice.

■ Return Replaced Parts

Along with an itemized final invoice, the law entitles the customer to all replaced parts.

If the customer neither asks for a replaced part nor authorizes you to throw it away—in other words, he or she does not mention the part—you must keep it for two business days after the vehicle is picked up.

If you ask and the customer does not want the part, you may throw it away.

If you have an exchange agreement for a certain used part with your supplier, you must show the part to the customer first before giving it to the supplier or hold the part for two business days. The customer may keep the part, provided the customer pays you the core charge.

■ Make Sure Your Shop Displays "The Sign"

Michigan law requires all registered repair facilities to post a consumer information sign where it may be clearly seen and read by the customer.

The sign must meet certain requirements, such as size and wording. See the *Repair Facility Manual* for details or contact the Michigan Department of State.

Additional automotive brochures published by the Department of State:

Auto Repair Rights & Repair Tips
Consumer's Automotive Information & Complaint Kit
Consumer's Guide to Automatic Transmission Service
Consumer's Guide to Brake Repair Service
Consumer's Guide to Buying a Vehicle from a Dealership
Consumer's Guide to Collision Repairs
Consumer's Guide to Engine Replacement
Consumer's Guide to Vehicle Leasing
Consumer's Guide to Vehicle Restoration

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